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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

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** The information contained in the addendum was received after the submission of the main report.

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III. Replies received from Governments

Portugal

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[11 August 2011]

Portugal reaffirms its commitment to the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, as an important step towards achieving enduring peace and security in the region and beyond.

As a token of its commitment, Portugal participated in the European Union seminar to promote confidence-building and in support of a process aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in the Middle East, held in Brussels, in July 2011. The seminar was an important step in preparing a conference on the subject, to be held in 2012, which Portugal fully supports.

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29 September 2011

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Sixty-sixth session
Agenda items 94 and 101

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Iran (Islamic Republic of)

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[16 September 2011]

Almost four decades have elapsed since the introduction of the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East for the very first time, by Iran, in 1974. The consensual adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, since 1980, signifies the particular importance of the realization of this noble idea in the vital region of the Middle East for the international community. Moreover, the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have highlighted the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East as a matter of priority in all consensus documentation of the successive review conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Notwithstanding the global call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, no concrete progress has been achieved towards its realization due to the intransigent policy of the Zionist regime. Owing to the non-adherence of this regime to the Treaty and more importantly, the refusal of this regime to place its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification system, the establishment of such a zone, as a lofty and long-sought aspiration of the countries in the region, has yet to materialize. The irresponsible behaviour of this regime in this respect has put the establishment of such a zone in the region in the near future in serious doubt.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a recognized regional measure to strengthen regional and international peace and security. Such an arrangement is in conformity with the provisions of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In this context, by ratifying all major treaties banning weapons of mass destruction, namely the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and fully complying with their provisions, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken practical steps in support of the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and urges all countries of the region to intensify their efforts for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and related threats from this region.

In addition, the Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no efforts in supporting meaningful steps aimed at making progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in appropriate international forums. In this respect, Iran actively participated in the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It supports the consensus conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the Review Conference, which include, inter alia, measures for the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The 2010 Review Conference reaffirmed the importance of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and stressed

that "the resolution remains valid until the goals and objectives are achieved" since it "is an essential element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995". Accordingly, States Parties to the Treaty renewed their "resolve to undertake, individually and collectively, all necessary measures aimed at its prompt implementation". The Conference also recalled "the reaffirmation by the 2000 Review Conference of the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards".[1]

The Zionist regime is the only obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Peace and stability cannot be achieved in the Middle East while the massive nuclear arsenal of that regime continues to threaten the region and beyond. The Zionist regime's history is replete with aggressions and threats against countries and nations of the region. The 33-day war with Lebanon and 22-day barbaric attack on Gaza are two recent examples of this regime's atrocities. This regime still continues the inhuman blockade of the Gaza Strip that led to the worsening humanitarian crisis therein. The worst is that, on 31 May 2010, Zionist forces attacked the international civilian convoy carrying humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, that is, the Freedom Flotilla, in international waters. These measures show the grave threat posed by such an irresponsible regime and prove how much nuclear weapons in the hands of such a regime could endanger regional as well as international peace and security.

Iran believes that the implementation of relevant measures contained in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 Review Conference should lead to the prompt and unconditional accession of this regime to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon party. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the firm belief that an agreed plan of action and timetable for universality of the Treaty in the Middle East should be a top priority on the agenda of all regional parties to the Treaty, and the nuclear-weapon States in particular, at the conference on the Middle East, to be held in 2012. There should be enough pressure on the Zionist regime, particularly at the upcoming conference, to accede to the Treaty, without any delay and without any condition, as a non-nuclear-weapon party, and place all its nuclear facilities under the IAEA safeguards to pave the way for the long-sought-after goal of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

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[1] See *2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document*, vol. I (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)), part I, Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions, sect. IV.